

REMARKS

The present amendment is in response to the Office Action dated May 18, 2006. Claims 1-4, and 7-11 are now present in this case. Claims 1-4, and 7-11 have been amended. Claims 5 and 6 are canceled.

Drawings

The examiner objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) because Claim 6 recited a second recessed connector panel surface not depicted in the figures. Applicants have cancelled Claim 6 and therefore respectfully request withdrawal of examiner's objection to the drawings.

Claim Objections

Claim 5 is objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as being of improper dependent form. Because Claim 5 has been canceled from the application, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this objection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112 (Indefiniteness)

Claims 2-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. As mentioned above, Claims 5 and 6 have been cancelled. The Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections and request reconsideration.

With respect to Claim 7, examiner asserts it was unclear what Applicants mean by “secured inboard of and closes the first end.” Applicants amended Claim 7 to substitute the language “recessed inwardly relative to an outer profile of the case” for the original language “secured inboard of.” This substitution was made merely to clarify Claim 7 as originally filed and does not recite a new claim limitation. Applicants believe amended Claim 7 is definite and in condition for allowance. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 7 based on 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claims 2-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite because it is unclear what “a reduced height removable lid” is with respect with respect to Claims 2-4. For the purposes of examination, examiner interpreted the claim language to mean “that at least a portion of a lid has a height less

than that of the tallest height of the case.” Claim 2 has been amended to include examiner’s interpretation of the claim language. Claims 3 and 4 depend from Claim 2. Claims 2-4 now recite “wherein a portion of the removable lid has a height less than that of the tallest height of the case.” Because Applicants have amended Claims 2-4 to incorporate examiner’s understanding of the claim language at issue, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102 (Anticipation)

Anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 3,482,895 to Becklin

Claims 1, 8, 10, and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,482,895 to Becklin. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Amended independent Claim 1 recites a connector panel. As described in the application, the connector panel 30 may have a number of cable, electrical, or other fittings depending on the specific components inside the case. P. 6 ¶1. The connector panel 30 allows electrical connections between components inside the case and resources or other components outside the case while the removable lid is secured to the case. When the case is used to house electronics, the electrical connections can remain in place as the lid is removed from the case. In other words, electrical connections that run through the connector panel and are apart from and independent of the removable lid.

Becklin discloses a protective case for transporting electronic components. Becklin does not disclose either structural elements or a means for establishing electrical connections between components inside the case and resources or other components outside the case while its lids are secured to the case. Therefore, Becklin does not disclose a connector panel. Instead, one must remove one of the lids to power components inside the case. Becklin at Col. 1, Ins. 57-62. Specifically, as illustrated in Figure 2, the case preferably has two open ends to permit instruments that have rear power supplies or connection wiring to be operated while contained in the shell. Becklin at Col. 1, Ins. 57-60. For self-contained instruments, the outer shell may be fabricated with only one open end. Becklin at Col. 1, Ins. 60-62.

While not disclosed by Becklin, one could establish electrical connections with the components inside the case by boring through-holes into the lids. However, if through-holes were bored into one or both of the lids, power or other connections to the components would be disrupted whenever the lids were removed to gain access to the components inside the case. This problem is eliminated in the present invention by the connector panel that allows connections to components inside the case while the lids are secured to the case and access to those components by simply removing the lids without disrupting connection(s) to those components. Therefore, even with this undisclosed modification, Becklin does not teach a connector panel.

Further, Claim 1 recites that the surface of the connector panel is recessed relative to an outer profile of the case. Becklin does not show a connector panel, and certainly not one that is recessed. Even boring through-holes in the lids of the Becklin case would not provide a connector panel recessed relative to an outer profile of the case. Because Becklin does not recite either a connector panel or a recessed connector panel, Becklin does not anticipate Claim 1 and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 1 based on anticipation by Becklin.

Claims 10 and 11 depend from Claim 1 and are patentable over Becklin for the same reasons Claim 1 is patentable over Becklin. Claims 10-11 also recite additional claim elements not present in Claim 1 that further distinguish them from the teachings of Becklin. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 10-11 based on anticipation by Becklin.

Independent Claim 8 recites a connector panel that is recessed relative to the removable lid. As discussed above, Becklin does not teach a connector panel. Further, boring through-holes in the lids of the Becklin case would not provide a connector panel recessed relative to the removable lid. Because Becklin does not recite either a connector panel or a recessed connector panel, Becklin does not anticipate Claim 8 and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 8 based on anticipation by Becklin.

Anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 3,544,751 to Valles

Claims 1-3 and 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,544,751 to Valles. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection and request reconsideration.

Independent Claim 1 is directed toward a case for rack mounted equipment. Valles teaches a microwave oven having a meshing microwave door seal. Because Valles does not teach either a case or a case into which rack mounted equipment may be placed, Valles does not anticipate Claim 1. Further, Claim 1 also recites additional structural elements including a recessed connector panel that are not taught by the microwave oven of Valles. Valles discloses a power pack 2 having a front side which is recessed relative to the outside surface of the door 3 of the microwave. Please refer to Figure 1. However, the front side of the power pack 2 is not a connector panel. As mentioned above, the connector panel 30 allows electrical connections between components inside the case and resources or other components outside the case while the removable lid is secured to the case. Turning now to Valles, instead of including electrical connections, the front side of the power pack 2 includes conventional controls such as a timer 6 and interlock 7. Valles at Col. 2, Ins. 49-52. Therefore, Valles does not teach a recessed connector panel. Because Valles does not teach all of the elements recited by Claim 1, Valles fails to anticipate Claim 1 and Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection with respect to Claim 1.

Dependent Claims 2, 3, and 7 depend from Claim 1 and are patentable over Valles for the same reasons Claim 1 is patentable over Valles. Claims 2, 3, and 7 also recite additional claim elements not present in Claim 1 that further distinguish them from the teachings of Valles. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 2, 3, and 7 based on anticipation by Valles.

Like Independent Claim 1, independent Claim 8 is directed toward a case for rack mounted equipment. As discussed above in relation to examiner's rejection of Claim 1 as anticipated by Valles, Valles does not teach either a case or a case into which rack mounted equipment may be placed. Additionally, Claim 8 recites a connector panel that is recessed relative to a removable lid. As discussed above, Valles discloses a power pack 2 having a front side which is recessed relative to the outside surface of the door 3 of the microwave. Because the front side of the power

pack 2 is not a connector panel, Valles does not teach a connector panel recessed relative to a removable lid and therefore does not anticipate the invention recited by Claim 8. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection with respect to Claim 8.

Dependent Claim 9 depends from Claim 8 and is patentable over Valles for the same reasons Claim 8 is patentable over Valles. Claim 9 also recites additional claim elements not present in Claim 8 that further distinguishes Claim 9 from the teachings of Valles. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claim 9 based on anticipation by Valles.

Anticipation by U.S. Publication No. US 2002/0113386 to Be

Claims 1-6, 8, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Publication No. US 2002/0113386 to Be. Claims 5 and 6 have been cancelled from the application. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection with respect to Claims 1-4, 8, and 9 and request reconsideration.

Independent Claims 1 and 8 are directed toward a case for rack mounted equipment. Be teaches a body bag for bowling bags. Because Be does not teach a case into which rack mounted equipment may be mounted, Be does not anticipate either Claim 1 or Claim 8. Further, Claims 1 and 8 both recite a connector panel that is not taught by the bag of Be. In fact, Be does not relate to electronics and does not teach any connections of any kind related to electronic components. Because Be does not teach all of the claim elements of independent Claims 1 and 8, Be fails to anticipate these claims.

Dependent Claims 1-4 depend from Claim 1 and dependent Claim 9 depends from Claim 8. All of these dependent claims recite additional claim elements not present in the independent claim from which they depend that further distinguish dependent Claims 1-4 and 9 from the teachings of Be. For example, Be does not teach a removable lid having a portion with a height less than that of the tallest height of the case as recited by Claims 2, 3, and 4. Be teaches two lids 2 hinged to opposite ends of a body member 1. Be at ¶17. Both lids extend the entire height of the body bag (please refer to Figures 1–3 and 5-12) and neither lid includes a portion with a height

less than the tallest height of the body bag. Instead, the lids may include an exterior pouch 104 that may be smaller than the lid to which it is attached. Be at ¶17. Therefore, because Be does not teach this element of Claims 2, 3, and 4, Be fails to anticipate these claims.

Similarly, because Be does not teach either a connector panel or a removable lid having a portion with a height less than that of the tallest height of the case, Be does not teach a connector panel positioned above or below the portion of the removable lid with a height less than that of the tallest height of the case as recited by Claim 3. Therefore, Be does not anticipate Claim 3. Further, Claim 9 recites the connector panel surface that is permanently secured to the case. Because Be does not teach a connector panel, Be does not teach a connector panel surface permanently secured to the case as recited by Claim 9.

Because Be fails to anticipate Claims 1-4, 8, and 9, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-4, 8, and 9 based on anticipation by Be.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the subject application and its allowance are kindly requested. The applicants have made a good faith effort to place all claims in condition for allowance. If questions remain regarding the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (206) 628-7739.

Respectfully submitted,

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